CLAIMS

1. A composite material comprising a substrate layer that is permeable to water vapour and a coating layer that is permeable to water vapour, characterised in that the coating layer comprises a plastics material, which plastics material is selected from olefin polymers, olefin copolymers, blends of olefin (co)polymers and mixtures of two or more of these, the said plastics material having particles of filler distributed therein.

2. A composite material according to claim 1, in which the substrate layer comprises a nonwoven material.

3. A composite material according to claim 2, in which the nonwoven material comprises cellulose fibres.

4. A composite material according to claim 3, in which the cellulose fibres are derived from hardwood pulp and softwood pulp.

5. A composite material according to claim 2, 3 or 4, in which the nonwoven material comprises synthetic fibres.

6. A composite material according to claim 5, in which the synthetic fibres are polyester fibres.

7. A composite material according to claim 5 or 6, in which the synthetic fibres have a fibre length of 5 to 20 mm and a linear density of 1 to 6 denier (9 to 54 tex).

8. A composite material according to any of claims 2 to 7, in which the nonwoven material is bonded with a resin binder.

9. A composite material according to claim 8, in which the resin binder is an acrylic or vinyl acetate resin.

Replaced by Article 34

10. A composite material according to any of claims 2 to 9, in which the nonwoven material comprises an opacity-increasing filler.

11. A composite material according to claim 10, in which the opacity-increasing filler is calcium carbonate.

12. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 11, in which the substrate layer has a basis weight of from 30 to 200 g/m^2 and the coating layer has a basis weight of from 10 to 50g/m^2.

13. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 12, in which the plastics material has a water vapour transmission rate of at least 14 g/m^2 24 h at 25°C/75% RH, measured on the unfilled plastics material at a mass per unit area of 45 g/m^2.

14. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 13, which has a water vapour transmission rate of at least 30 g/m^2 24 h at 25°C/75% RH.

15. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 14 in which the plastics material comprises a copolymer of an olefin and an alkyl acrylate or methacrylate.

16. A composite material according to claim 15, in which the plastics material comprises a copolymer of ethylene and butyl acrylate.

17. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 16 in which the filler is present in the coating layer in an amount of up to 40% by weight of the filled plastics material in the coating layer.

18. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 17, in which the filler in the plastics material is a mineral filler, e.g. calcium carbonate or a mixture of calcium carbonate or a mixture of calcium carbonate and titanium dioxide.

19. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 18, in which the coating layer has a thickness in the range of from 10 to 50 μm and the substrate layer has a thickness in the range of from 80 to 500 μm.

20. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 19 that is permeable to water vapour.

21. A process for the production of a composite material, which process comprises applying a coating formulation as a coating layer on a substrate layer, the coating layer and substrate layer being permeable to water vapour, wherein the coating formulation comprises a material that is selected from olefin polymers, olefin copolymers, blends of olefin (co)polymers and mixtures of two or more thereof and has particles of filler therein.

22. A process according to claim 21 for the production of a composite material according to any of claims 2 to 20.

23. A process according to claim 21 or 22, in which the coating is effected by extrusion coating.

24. The use as a wall covering of a composite material according to any of claims 1 to 20 or a composite material produced by the process of claim 21, 22 or 23.

25. A composite material according to any of claims 1 to 20 or produced by a process according to claim 21, 22 or 23, being a composite material for use as a wall cover material.

26. A method of covering an area of wall surface that comprises applying to said area of wall surface a composite material according to any of claims 1 to 20 or produced by a process according to claim 21, 22 or 23.

27. A coating formulation that comprises a plastics material that is selected from olefin polymers, olefin copolymers, blends of olefin (co)polymers and mixtures of two or more thereof and that has particles of filler therein.

28. A coating formulation according to claim 27, in which the plastics material is as defined in claim 15 or 16 and/or in which the amount of filler is as defined in claim 17 and/or in which the filler is as defined in claim 18.